



The American Hungarian Federation

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WASHINGTON, DC -- February 8, 2018

The American Hungarian Federation on the Occasion of the Unveiling of a Statue Honoring Former Congressman Tom Lantos

A statue honoring former U.S. Congressman and Holocaust survivor Tom Lantos was unveiled in Budapest, Hungary on Thursday, February 1, 2018. Congressman Lantos was a close friend of the American Hungarian Federation (AHF) and a recipient of that organization's highest award, the Col. Commandant Michael Kovats Medal of Freedom for his "Leadership in Support of Democracy, Human Rights and Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe."¹

As the founder of the Hungarian Congressional Caucus, he was indefatigable in promoting good US/Hungarian bi-lateral relations and human and minority rights of the Hungarian historical communities living in states bordering Hungary, as when he sponsored a congressional resolution calling upon Romania to return communal and religious properties that the previous Communist regime had confiscated. Congressman Lantos also was dedicated to keeping the memory of the horrors of the Holocaust alive to prevent such barbarity from occurring again.

On the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Holocaust, he reminded us that "too often the efforts of those who struggled against the Nazi oppression go unrecognized." Congressman Lantos was referring to Colonel Ferenc Koszorus, a Hungarian army officer and an unsung hero whose unparalleled action saved thousands of Jews from deportation to the German death camps. Thousands of Jews from surrounding states found refuge in Hungary, whose Jewish population exceeded 800,000 in March 1944, just a few months before the end of the World War II.²

Honoring Colonel Koszorus, Congressman Lantos noted that many "thousands of families are alive today as a result of the heroic actions of one man who stood up for his beliefs in a very uncertain and dangerous time. His loyalty to his country and love of humanity are an inspiration to all who struggle against oppression and the vile bigotry of racism." The Congressman recognized that Colonel Koszorus' unparalleled military action "also permitted the famous Raoul Wallenberg, who arrived in Budapest on July 9, 1944, to coordinate his successful and effective rescue mission."

AHF is delighted and most appreciative that Congressman Lantos is honored with a statue that will serve to remind us what an individual can accomplish by remaining true to his or her principles and willing to selflessly and purposefully act on those principles.

¹ http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news_Tom_Lantos2.htm

² http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/news_1944_TragedyFolly_Part2.html